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SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF GRAFFITI THROUGH CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The Graffiti Alert Project is the first graffiti prevention program of its kind in Australia. It involves establishing contact with graffiti crews, utilising the services of community members in graffiti removal, the appointment of area supervisors to monitor incidence and repeat attacks, and the provision of legal venues for graffiti artists. A newsletter is distributed every two weeks and the Project is active in community education in schools and in the production of information packages. The Project is affiliated with the Gold Coast City Council (who supplies the removal materials) and with the local Police Community Liaison section.

This practical, community-based Project utilises the strategies of situational crime prevention, demonstrates the success of removing 'broken windows', has avoided an escalation of violence by pre-empting the formation of vigilante groups and has provided young people in the area with employment and venues for their artwork. Evaluation of the Graffiti Alert Project has shown that there has been little displacement, that there has been an increase in community activity and participation, that young people have been employed to work on legal venues, and that the re-offence rate has dropped in targeted areas. This paper describes the history of the Graffiti Alert Project, details the results of the evaluation studies to date, and analyses the Project in light of situational and community crime prevention theory and methods.

Introduction

Any quantification of the total cost of graffiti can be only speculative but one estimate from a police graffiti squad in New South Wales gives a value of \$180,000 worth of damage per night (cited in Budd, 1989). The State Rail Authority in New South Wales spent \$225,000 in 1984-85 on graffiti removal alone (Wilson and Healy, 1987). The Gold Coast City Council spends between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per annum on cleaning graffiti from council property, and the adjacent Albert Shire Council spends in excess of \$200,000 per year. These are conservative figures as the Gold Coast region is said to have one of the highest incidence of graffiti in Australia.

But whatever the financial cost is, the real costs are in crime and social consequences. The crime costs are those other offences such as break-and-enters, robbing, stealing and sometimes assault and death that are associated with obtaining paint supplies, gaining access to properties, 'tagging' at dangerous locations, and in the crew wars that periodically erupt. The social costs include the sense of invasion of privacy that individuals experience, the frustration at being a victim of seemingly senseless random attacks and the generation of a more endemic fear of crime overall.

Most graffiti is committed by males aged as young as six years up to their early to mid twenties. They are part of a specific youth sub-culture with a specialised language (eg 'def' for excellent and 'jacks' for police), often distinctive clothing (homeboy or hip-hop in the 1990s) and defined although extensive territories (Budd, 1989). On the Gold Coast there are over 3,000 members and an estimated 32 gangs comprising graffiti 'writers' (those with over 1,000 pieces) and 'toys' (novices with under 1,000 pieces). They are drawn from a cross-section of social class backgrounds, although many live in single-parent households, and contrary to public perception, most artists are in full-time education or employment (McGilvray, 1994). Vandalism combined

Crime prevention conference

with graffiti tagging is usually carried out by younger participants _ the inexperienced 'toys' who on the Gold Coast range in age from 12 to 16 years (McGilvray, 1994).² The older group of 17 to 22 year olds are the experienced 'writers' who produce elaborate designs and rarely engage in destructive vandalism (McGilvray, 1994).

Motivations for engaging in graffiti generally focus on the need for self-expression. So that the writing or tags are messages as a means of establishing identity and for communication (Wilson and Healy, 1987). The number of tags is crucial in achieving recognition among peers. So too is the level of risk-taking or the dangerousness involved (eg 'roofies' such as the tagging done high on Magic Mountain). Lack of self-esteem and indeed an immature appearance (ie physically underdeveloped) are characteristic of artists as a group (McGilvray, 1994). They are also creative and intelligent. So, this combination of artistry, risk-taking and lack of self-esteem provides the motivation to express themselves through graffiti.

Motivations aside, our approaches to juvenile justice generally are confused between a welfare and a just deserts approach _ one more compassionate, the other more punitive (Lincoln and Wilson, 1994), and policy choices in the area of juvenile justice often are swayed by law and order media campaigns (Broadhurst and Loh, 1993). This vacillation combined with media influence is particularly evident in our views towards graffitiists.

The more recent restorative approaches to juvenile justice place the victim or object of the crime back into the picture (see Sarre, 1994), but with graffiti the victim is often the state as in 'marks' and 'tags' on transport stations, electricity sub-stations and other public utilities. And it is in the realm of public space that graffiti has been most often studied _ public transport systems in particular (see Wilson and Healy, 1987; Sloan-Howitt and Kelling, 1992). While the state is the victim in roughly half the incidents (McGilvray, 1994), there is a need for the community to share the responsibility of the problem and to take part in its eradication.

Following Braithwaite's (1993) suggestion, this paper brings together the practical experience of one of our authors who is involved in the daily running of a graffiti prevention program and the research skills of criminologists to examine a local problem. We believe that this is important practical research that will provide directions for broader policy formulation and implementation.

Based on an action research paradigm, the Graffiti Alert Project demonstrates the benefits of having researchers and practitioners work closely together. Indeed, the work done to date follows the five steps outlined for situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1992):

1. data collection about the specific problem of graffiti on the Gold Coast;
2. analysis of the specific conditions that prevent or escalate the problem;
3. study of the ways to reduce the problem of graffiti and the costs involved;
4. implementation of the best cost-efficient options; and
5. evaluation and dissemination of the results.

The Graffiti Alert Project

The Graffiti Alert Project (GAP) was launched on 21 October 1993 in the Gold Coast area of Queensland. It was instigated by a local resident who saw the incidence of graffiti and community outrage about it increasing in the tourist strip. At that time there were citizen calls for tougher measures to combat graffiti and threats of vigilante groups forming. In response to this perceived epidemic of graffiti on the Gold Coast, especially in the Nobby Beach and Mermaid Beach areas, action-research was undertaken by the founder of GAP from May to October 1993. This included literature reviews, discussions with local police and welfare workers, criminologists and local council representatives. A questionnaire was distributed to 122 randomly selected residents (with a response rate of 98%) in the one-kilometre central area of these two suburbs. The results were that over 80% of respondents claimed that they had been victims of graffiti attacks and that over 95% were prepared to voluntarily remove graffiti if materials were supplied. The specific means of reducing graffiti were developed from this initial research.

The Graffiti Alert Project is the only project of its kind operating in Australia. The association is not incorporated and there are no paid staff but key volunteers comprise the co-ordinator, four area supervisors and a media liaison officer. In addition, there are volunteers who report regularly on instances of graffiti and who are involved in clean-up days. Community service workers, directed to the project through the courts, provide

their assistance for graffiti removal each week and there is a community police liaison officer involved with the Project. The area supervisors control the suburbs of Runaway Bay, Miami Beach, Burleigh Heads and Palm Beach and have been functioning since January 1994. In addition to administrative duties, the coordinator takes the 'area supervisor' role for Nobby Beach, Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach and Mermaid Beach, plus remaining suburbs as required.

There are several graffiti projects that have or still do operate in Australia. Wollongong, for example, has a youth facility run by the local council that features legal tagging. The GAP scheme is unique however in four key areas:

1. it provides preventative advice, education and information to victims to reduce return attacks;
2. it is designed to work collaboratively with both community agencies and the graffiti artists;
3. it operates on a network basis within the local community; and
4. it provides fast removal of graffiti and frequent monitoring of artists and targets.

The overall aims of the Project include:

1. **Situational measures** - active removal of graffiti, auditing and monitoring of graffiti incidents, surveillance by area supervisors, lobbying for sale restrictions and active encouragement of target hardening.
2. **Education and information measures** - fortnightly newsletter, training citizens in graffiti removal, seminars to schools and universities, publication and distribution of prevention package and booklets and positive publicity campaigns to reduce incidence.
3. **Community measures** - involvement of volunteers in clean-ups, liaison with community groups, use of community service workers, local government authority support, provision of legal venues for artists and passing on information to police.

Most of the work of the GAP volunteers involves the fast removal of graffiti which is aimed to be done within 24 hours. Obscene, racist or otherwise offensive graffiti is removed as soon as possible as a matter of urgency. However, permission must be sought from private home owners and businesses before graffiti can be removed. This can delay the removal process, especially in the tourist strip where many dwellings are not owner-occupied. If permission is not provided then a follow-up is done within two weeks. The response from owners is improving as the Project becomes more established, as real estate agents see the benefits of encouraging absentee owners to provide permission, and as commercial enterprises acknowledge the disadvantages of leaving graffiti untouched (see Table 4).

GAP works closely with the local police and this is one of its strengths. A community police liaison officer was appointed in November 1993 and regular contact is made at least every two to four weeks. GAP is also a part of the Crime Stoppers program and has frequent contact. Contact is maintained also with the Juvenile Aid Bureau and the CIB. GAP passes on 'street information' to the police (potential target areas to be hit, visiting crews, etc). GAP also provides information about individual artists to the police when the artist has ignored the warning system (three warnings to known artists who continue illegal hits).

GAP has instigated legal venues for artists _ the first was in November 1993 at Beenleigh. There have now been 14 legal venues with a further six currently being negotiated. These are all granted by businesses; are located generally on shopfronts, fences, carpark walls; and include both murals and signwriting. Initially, the legal venues were restricted to a form of restorative justice where the business owners were compensated by the artists _ in exchange for being a victim of 'tagging' the owners received an attractive mural or signwriting of their choice. However, the concept has developed, as originally envisaged, to paid legal venues where the provider supplies the paint materials and pays the artists \$50 to \$100 depending on the scope of the job. Artists are fully supervised and all remaining paint materials remain with the owner on completion of the job. The local government authority and local police are now involved in securing and/or supervising these legal venues.

The Project has an educational function in that it provides a free Preventative Measures Package to schools. This contains booklets (Reducing Graffiti and Vandalism Attacks in Schools), details of strategies such as School Watch, outlines security measures and legal venues, and provides general information about graffiti. These have been distributed to 85% of local pre-schools, primary and high schools, and will eventually cover all schools in the region. Seminars have also been presented to educational institutions.

The informational aims of GAP are achieved by distributing a general booklet about preventing graffiti and vandalism in homes, public facilities, private properties and public transport as a free community service. A newsletter is distributed every two weeks to over 350 citizens or businesses, with a surveyed readership of over 850. The newsletter details results of audits, clean-up days, community involvement, community announcements and provides contacts for area supervisors, Crime Stoppers and the Police. A sustained media campaign has also been a feature of the informational aspects of the Project. Publicity through local radio, television and newspapers was high during the commencement phase of the Project. Direct publicity has decreased in recent months now that the project is established (see conclusions for further discussion).

Clean-up days are aimed at dealing with areas that have high graffiti problems, but which are not yet officially part of GAP – that is no daily monitoring and no volunteer area supervisor. An audit of the area (obtaining a count of all graffiti pieces by location and whether they are on public or private facilities) is first conducted. The local government representative is contacted and fliers are distributed to households and businesses to seek permission for the free removal of graffiti. Clean-up days offer a high profile within the specific community that is targeted but deliberately adopt a low profile in the media because of the possibility of increased return attacks. Future clean-up days are planned for Southport, Coolangatta and Broadbeach. The Project was also involved in the national Clean Up Australia campaign in January this year.

GAP works closely with many other community organisations such as the Community Arts Service, Krurungal Aboriginal Service, Legacy, Citizens Advice Bureau, Volunteers Referral Service and surf lifesaving clubs. The Project is now registered with the Department of Corrective Services as a part of the Community Service Workers scheme. Since July 1994, GAP has had between eight and 12 community service workers take part in either graffiti removal or newsletter distribution for five hours per week each (usually on weekends).

The Project has the support of the Gold Coast City Council who supplies graffiti remover (So-Safe non-aerosol liquid in two types for painted surfaces and concrete surfaces) for both public and private targets. The Gold Coast City Council is responsible for the 42 kms stretch of coastline from Paradise Point to Coolangatta and some inland areas. No financial support, apart from supply of remover, is given by the Council. GAP reports incidents of graffiti on council property to the Council on a regular basis. The Council are generally responsible for removal of graffiti from their own facilities but GAP monitors and notifies the Council of graffiti locations and does clean some public targets (around 20% of the public utilities tagged or hit). Preliminary negotiations with the neighbouring Albert Shire Council, which covers the inland region of 1,300 kms from the southern outskirts of Brisbane almost to the New South Wales border are underway to implement a policy about graffiti removal. To this end some audits were done at Robina and Mermaid Waters, suburbs within the Albert Shire, and these data are included here.

The Study

Audits were conducted in two locations (Nobby Beach and Mermaid Beach) prior to the commencement of the project. The audits involve a street-by-street count of every piece of graffiti on public and private facilities. Local government area maps are used to determine the exact locations and to define the areas of study. Follow-up audits have been conducted at regular intervals over the ensuing ten month period. Only the most recent follow-up figures are shown in Table 1.⁴ The results overall, in the specific areas where GAP is operational, shows that there have been 2,509 pieces of graffiti removed and only 150 return attacks during the period from the Project's commencement in October 1993 until July 1994.

Table 1: Audit and follow-up audit figures by suburb, 1993-94.

Location	Date	Initial Audit		Follow-up Audit %	
		Total	Date	Total	Change
Nobby Beach	Sept 93	228	Aug 94	6	- 97
Surfers Paradise	Nov 93	563	Aug 94	282	- 50
Mermaid Beach	Oct 93	874	Aug 94	40	- 95
Broadbeach	Dec 93	254	Jul 94	21	- 92
Isle of Capri	May 94	159	no follow-up audit		
Chevron Island	Jun 94	78	no follow-up audit		
Miami Beach	Jun 94	407	no follow-up audit		
Burleigh Heads	Apr 94	617	Aug 94	180	- 71
Palm Beach	no audit details				
Runaway Bay	no audit details				
Mermaid Waters	Apr 94	887	no follow-up audit		
Robina	Apr 94	318	Jul 94	446	+ 40

These locations clearly vary in size and in nature (ie the composition of commercial, industrial and domestic housing areas, facilities available, attractions for young people, presence or absence of police station and so on). A preliminary analysis has been done of the areas in an attempt to specify their characteristics.

Nobby Beach is a residential area not a tourist location that has a small commercial centre and an elderly population. It formerly contained the deserted tourist site of Magic Mountain _ considered a place for 'taggers' and 'toys' to experiment with art, as well as an amusement parlour and skateboard shop but these have now closed and Magic Mountain has been demolished. The surf lifesaving club no longer holds rock concerts. There is no police station but there are police and private security patrols. GAP is based here and monitors on a daily basis. As a result of public information campaigns lighting has been improved and shrubbery has been pruned.

Surfers Paradise is a tourist area with high traffic, a high proportion of high rise buildings, a low rate of owner-occupied residential dwellings, is a commercial centre, and has the Cavill Avenue Mall and other venues that are attractive to young people. GAP now monitors this suburb on a weekly basis since July 1994 and lighting and shrubbery have been improved.

Mermaid Beach is not a high tourist area, has no police station and few private security forces. There are several poorly-lit parks in the area, several amusement parlours that are open 24 hours, a cinema complex and fast food outlets. GAP monitors this location on a daily basis and some improvements to lighting have been noted. The legal venue has also had an impact on the reduction of graffiti in this suburb.

Broadbeach is a tourist area, with a large commercial centre, where security is described generally as good, with flood lighting in high rise and in some parks, and the police station in the area does patrols at night. GAP monitors Broadbeach on a daily basis.

Isle of Capri is an exclusive residential area with a small commercial centre, no police station, no regular police patrols, poor lighting in some areas and it is close to Surfers Paradise. There have been no legal venues but it is a cohesive and community-spirited suburb. GAP monitors about once per month and has had a clean-up day.

Chevron Island is a high rental area, with a high youthful population, no police presence, public facilities are poorly-lit and secluded areas are high in number, members of a Sydney graffiti crew were previously living in the area but they have since moved. GAP monitors on a monthly basis and has had clean-ups in the area.

Miami Beach has no police station, poor lighting overall, the public facilities are secluded, over 30 artists reside in this suburb, but attacks have reduced since the legal venues commenced and the presence of the community service workers each week appears to have made an impact. The Project is present on a daily basis.

Burleigh Heads is a major tourist centre, with a high elderly population but also a transient population, at least 24 artists reside in the suburb. GAP has been assisted here by the Councillor for the area, police patrols have improved recently, and monitoring is done daily.

Mermaid Waters has a few industrial areas that are deserted at night, lighting and security in parks is particularly bad with poor visual access to the street from the parks because of vegetation along the road, houses near these parks tend to get 'hit' frequently. GAP does not operate in this Albert Shire suburb as yet.

Robina has features (design of roads and housing) that discourage graffiti, such as small cul-de-sacs, security systems in homes, good lighting and opportunity for guardians are features. GAP does not operate in this Albert Shire suburb as yet.

A more systematic evaluation is currently being undertaken of the features of each of these suburbs so that the monitoring of graffiti can be related to these elements in the future. This is a complex task that needs to cover the broad geographic and demographic characteristics, the commercial versus residential composition, the level of occupation of the area, the specific attractions for young people, the public facilities and utilities, and detailed descriptions of the dwelling types. For example, paler walls attract much more graffiti than darker coloured walls and many residential areas on the Gold Coast have adopted a Californian-style 'gated' or 'fortressed' approach with high concrete surrounds. It is clear that such analysis will be an enormous undertaking but the information yielded is essential in developing specific recommendations for 'target hardening' and other prevention measures in the future.

Table 2: Audit figures showing percentage of pieces of graffiti removed and number of return attacks (new pieces) by location.

Location	Date	% of pieces removed	No of return attacks (new pieces)
Nobby Beach	Aug 94	98.6	3
Surfers Paradise	Aug 94	58.4	14
Mermaid Beach	Aug 94	95.4	34
Broadbeach	Jul 94	91.7	42
Isle of Capri	May 94	89.0	3
Chevron Island	Jun 94	53.8	5
Miami Beach	Jun 94	49.1	51
Burleigh Heads	Aug 94	70.8	14
Palm Beach	no details		
Runaway Bay	no details		
Mermaid Waters	no removals		
Robina	no removals		

Preliminary results concerning the targeting of public versus private facilities shows considerable variation from one location to another. Overall, graffiti is found in roughly equal proportions on public and private targets (see Table 3). Public facilities include council utilities, government offices, Australia Post boxes, bus shelters, rubbish bins, street signs, parks and electricity sub-stations. Private facilities are all domestic dwellings, private commercial businesses, shops, industrial enterprises, letter boxes, motels and tourist attractions.

Table 3: Comparison of public versus private targets by location, 1993-94.

Location	Date	Private		Public		Total
		No	%	No	%	
Nobby Beach	Sept 93	40	18	188	82	228
Surfers Paradise	May 94	245	51	237	49	482
Mermaid Beach	Oct 93	288	33	586	67	874
Broadbeach	Dec 93	102	40	152	60	254
Isle of Capri	May 94	45	28	114	72	159
Chevron Island	Jun 94	47	60	31	40	78
Miami Beach	Jun 94	322	79	85	21	407
Burleigh Heads	Apr 94	235	38	382	62	617
Palm Beach		no audit details				
Runaway Bay		no audit details				
Mermaid Waters	Apr 94	387	44	500	56	887
Robina	Apr 94	133	42	185	58	318

There is considerable evidence that the presence of legal venues has an effect of reducing graffiti in the immediate vicinity. At Mermaid Beach the incidence of illegal graffiti reduced by 54% in the two week period following the first legal venue in that location. At Nobby Beach, there have been seven legal venues and graffiti in the area decreased by 97% since the implementation of the high profile legal venues. At Miami, the reduction was 49% five weeks after the first legal there in July 1994. At Beenleigh, graffiti remains high but illegal graffiti in the immediate area of the shopping centre where the legal is situated has reduced by 96%. These reduction rates appear to be maintained over time. Legal venues also 're-direct' graffiti artists away from illegal tagging by providing work experience and contact with potential employers. One young artist is currently negotiating a long-term contract for his art work and has enrolled in a college course in art; while another has secured an apprenticeship.

Four clean-up days have been carried out to date. The details by location are listed in Table 4. These data also show the variation in responses from residents and businesses when permission is sought for free graffiti removal by GAP.

Table 4: Graffiti pieces at audit, number of pieces removed and permission response rate for clean-up days, May to June 1994 by location.

Location	Date of clean-up	No of pieces at audit	No of pieces removed	Permission rate
Surfers Paradise	May 94	482	105	50%
Isle of Capri	May 94	159	142	80%
Miami	June 94	407	72*	55%
Chevron Island	June 94	78	42	30%

* Removal at Miami Beach was along the highway only.

Initially, the local government authority offered public support to GAP and supplied all the graffiti remover. However, there was a three month period during which Council withdrew its support and GAP ran solely on private funds of the founder and from public donations. This arose because of a perception that graffiti attacks had increased and the authorities believed that this was due to the increased publicity about graffiti that GAP was generating. After much consultation with a representative from the Council, it was demonstrated that the return attacks had not increased in the targeted areas.

Conclusions

GAP addresses opportunity-reduction methods by being focused on a specific type of offence, by making systematic environmental changes, and by increasing risks and decreasing the rewards of the crime (Clarke, 1992). Like many small-scale successful schemes it developed because of the perceived problem in the local area and was developed by private individuals, the founder in particular, searching for the best solutions. Furthermore, it is truly a grassroots program that is based on a co-ordinated approach to reducing rewards and opportunities for graffitiists.

GAP follows examples of seven of the twelve situational techniques described by Clarke (1992, p 13):

- target hardening - reduce opportunities by promoting shrub growth against blank walls and pruning in other areas, painting of walls and fences in darker colours as these are less appealing to graffiti artists;
- access control - create greater defensible space by encouraging locking of entertainment and commercial centres so that after-hours access is restricted;
- deflecting offenders - channel graffitiists from illegal tagging to legal and/or paid venues;
- controlling facilitators - restrict access to tools by lobbying for regulation on the sale of spray paints;
- formal surveillance - increased and more effective police patrols through information provided by the Project, as well as involvement in crime stoppers program;
- natural surveillance - encourage better lighting and better design features through the education brochures; and most importantly,
- removing inducements - remove graffiti within 24 hours in supervised areas, where possible, so that further tagging is not attracted.

We have yet to ascertain what other factors may be involved in the decrease in graffiti offences that occurred in Nobby Beach and Mermaid Beach in particular. As we noted above, the defunct Magic Mountain attraction and several amusement and entertainment venues were closed down during the study period. Clearly, the presence of such establishments has an effect on the rate of offending (Engstad, 1975, cited in Clarke, 1992).

Following the rational-choice approach (Clarke and Cornish, 1985) our future evaluations will not ignore motivations of offenders. Qualitative data collection will elicit material on motives, perceptions, risk assessment of graffitiists and their attitudes to specific opportunity-reduction measures for defined areas on the Gold Coast.

In the evaluations carried out to date, displacement has not been specifically measured. To measure displacement is well beyond the scope and resources of the GAP staff. However, anecdotal material would suggest that some displacement may have occurred. In the areas of Nobby Beach in particular, which has been the key focus and hub of GAP activities, graffiti has decreased remarkably. But in areas in the tourist strip where there are no area supervisors and therefore no sustained clean-up campaigns, displacement is likely to have occurred.

However, it should be noted also that graffiti attacks can be driven by more than just opportunity. As a crime, it is possibly more spurious than many other forms and it is therefore influenced by many external factors that are less able to be controlled. In terms of 'broken window' style theory, attempts to remove graffiti as quickly as possible have an impact on the crews operating in the local area. But visiting or outside gangs are not always aware of the activities of GAP. Indeed, there have been instances when the Gold Coast has been the target of displacement when there has been a 'crack down' on artists in Brisbane. It is suggested that these Brisbane crews then hit the Gold Coast and target areas that are the object of sustained GAP attention. We therefore suggest that the evaluation will need to be more rigorous so that the patterns of displacement can be more closely monitored and the influence of non-local crews can be established.

With reference to the elements of the successful drink-driving campaign in New South Wales (see Homel and Wilson, 1987) where sustained publicity was a major feature of the package of measures undertaken, in the case of graffiti, we have yet to systematically evaluate the impact of media attention but intend to undertake this in the near future. Initial publicity was certainly useful in getting the project up and running, in obtaining local government support for the project, in encouraging citizens to become involved as volunteers, and certainly in raising donations during the period when the removal materials were not being supplied by the

Council. However, there were suggestions that publicity did increase the rate of graffiti on the Gold Coast. This has not been supported by the evidence to date.

Preliminary analysis of the data however suggest that whenever publicity is negative (increase in penalties, a war on graffitiists, etc) there appears to be an immediate and highly focused escalation of incidents. These were in the form of overnight bombings in the specific locations that were mentioned in the media reports. For example, in November 1993 one council member for the area of Burleigh was reported as fostering a war on graffitiists, albeit this was a misquote by the media. On the night of publication there were 30 new pieces of graffiti in Burleigh Heads. At least 12 other examples of the immediate impact of negative publicity have also been recorded. The opposite effect appears when the publicity or media reports are positive (legal venues, interviews with artists, etc) where there are no taggings for several weeks in the areas mentioned in the reports.

While GAP follows many of the techniques of situational crime prevention (target hardening, deflecting offenders, natural surveillance, formal surveillance, removing inducements, and so on) its overriding benefits have much in common with community crime prevention measures. These include greater awareness of the scope of the problem, community involvement in the Project and in local issues generally, forging of community links with community groups, and provision of legitimate alternative employment for youth. Most of all, the Project has prevented the advent of vigilante groups forming in the Gold Coast suburbs that were previously the hardest hit by graffitiists.

The threat of vigilante action against graffitiists was high in some areas of the Gold Coast. Indeed, this was one of the main factors that urged the commencement of the project. Groups of citizens were arming themselves and waiting at night for artists. There was one known incident of the bashing with a baseball bat of a young artist by an aggrieved resident.

In Braithwaite's (1989) terms the GAP allows reintegrative shaming to occur through the involvement of offenders on community service orders working on cleaning up graffiti, on attempting to rebuild community bonds with graffiti writers through the provision of legal venues, and the general participation of community members in the clean-up, auditing and public profile of the Project.

With respect to controlling facilitators, a petition has been commenced, with already 1,200 signatures obtained, to call for the restricted sale of spray paint. The proposals are similar to those restrictions under consideration in New South Wales and currently in force in some jurisdictions in the USA. The petition is expected to be presented to the State government in October. Community members who were involved or threatening vigilante action against graffitiists have now become involved in this aspect of the project.

There are of course problems with restriction of sale and this would need to be monitored. Displacement may occur to other tools (markers, crayons etc), revenge graffiti may increase, increased harassment of young people may occur, and increase in break-and-enter offences are possible. It is also recognised that access to paint supplies would not be eradicated by new regulations as young people could still gain paints through older consumers, through mail order from graffiti magazines, and through stockpiling.

In terms of graffiti reduction, we can conclude that GAP has been highly successful. It is fair to say that limitations to its success are largely because of lack of resources, mainly financial and human, to ensure that clean-up is fast and effective, that more legal venues are provided, that more community involvement is elicited, that a high profile for the campaign is expanded and that the education and information aspects of GAP are more widespread. Most importantly, it is the measures of its success that are most limited. To remedy this, we intend to undertake the evaluation measures noted above _ interviews with artists, defining suburb characteristics, examinations of displacement and a focus on 'hot spots' _ so that the Projects' real successes can be quantified.

Notes

1. Crews from one location tend to habitually bomb neighbouring locations, ie they usually have preferred areas. There are some individual exceptions who travel widely and seemingly indiscriminantly. However, recently there is more bombing within the crews' own suburbs and more flexibility of choice of target areas. This change in patterns of defined territories occurred after the closure of Magic Mountain, as this was a focus, or a gallery for artists.

2. There are 'writers' who are younger (aged 15 or 16) who do engage in vandalism. So it appears that vandalism combined with graffiti is more a product of the age of the artist rather than the sophistication of his artistry.
3. One wall or location can contain many individual pieces of graffiti. Each tag or piece of writing is identified and counted individually. To the untrained eye, these can appear as if they are one piece. In some cases 'capping' occurs when one piece is crossed out and another written over it. Future evaluations will focus on identifying the writer of each piece in the audit figures so that the origins can be specified (ie is this tag done by a local crew or the result of a 'crew war' and so on).
4. The first group of suburbs displayed in the Tables are those where monitoring and graffiti removal is carried out by the coordinator. The second group covers suburbs where area supervisors are present. The third group represents locations in the neighbouring Albert Shire where the Project is not operational. These were conducted to examine issues of displacement and to research the overall size of the graffiti problem in those areas.

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